Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

2003-2004 ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT

December, 2004

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations

2003- 2004 Accountability Report

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1. ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT

The Accountability Report of the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations for the year ended March 31, 2004, is prepared pursuant to the *Provincial Finance Act* and government policy and guidelines. These authorities require the reporting of outcomes against this Department's Business Plan information for the fiscal year 2003-04. The reporting of Department outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgments and opinions by Department Management.

We acknowledge that this Accountability Report is the responsibility of Department management. The report is, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in Department Business Plans for the year.

Minister _____ Deputy Minister _____

2. MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

I am pleased to present the 2003-2004 Accountability Report for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. This report details the Department's efforts to achieve the priorities outlined in its 2003-04 business plan and the initiatives undertaken to address issues and opportunities which arose during the year.

In 2003-2004, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations had several notable achievements, not the least of which include:

- providing a new online service to allow clients to pay motor vehicle fines over the internet;
- developing a performance indicator rating system for all 55 municipalities, to assist municipalities in Nova Scotia to better understand their own internal environment, the changes taking place in the external environment, and the relationship between the two;
- investing over $57 million in infrastructure that will improve the health and prosperity of people and municipalities across the province; and
- more funding for inclusive public transportation and accessible public buildings.

During the past year, our Department has worked towards improving the accessibility, quality and timeliness of government services while helping municipal governments to improve their communities.

Exit surveys at Access Centres and Registry of Motor Vehicle across the province in 2003-2004, indicated that overall customer satisfaction was slightly greater than 90 percent. Customers visiting any office in the province are likely served in less than 10 minutes and calls are answered within 20 seconds.

With our department's assistance, Nova Scotia municipalities are making strides in providing e-government services to their residents. The new land registration system which guarantees basic ownership rights and electronic integrated access to all land-related information is growing. We have now had 18 months of operational experience in the eight land registration counties in the Northern and Western regions of the province. Over that period, more than 4,000 parcels of land have been registered in the new land registration system.

We continue to work with the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities to build a more productive relationship between these two levels of government. Through our Department, municipalities have received technology and expertise to help them better serve their communities. Our municipal indicators program offers mayors, wardens, councillors and citizens benchmarks by which to judge their municipality's financial health and quality of life.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations will continue to build on our past successes and carry out initiatives that will help us achieve our goals for 2004-2005.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Need for Accountability

It is important that a publicly funded organization be held accountable for the actions it states will be undertaken over a particular period of time. An accountability document informs taxpayers as to how their taxes are being spent, provides decision makers with updates as to how well the organization's programs and services are operating and where adjustments may be required. It offers another tool for politicians to judge whether the organization is headed in the direction that was intended. Accountability is also a powerful incentive to program managers to show progress in their respective program areas.

This Report provides an accounting of how well Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) did in fulfilling the strategic direction (mandate, mission and goals), as well as the specific initiatives (priorities) it identified for achievement in the 2003-04 SNSMR Business Plan. While it is not intended that these priorities encompass the full breadth of the programs and services offered by this Department on an ongoing basis, they do represent the major, new initiatives that SNSMR stated would be moved forward during the year. The Department's Mission and Strategic Goals for 2003-04 were as follows (a discussion of the Department's mandate can be found in the Planning Environment section of the 2003-04 SNSMR Business Plan):

Mission

> To provide Nova Scotians with seamless, easy access to numerous government services in a cost-effective manner while maintaining the interests of the public and municipalities.

Strategic Goals

1. Improve accessibility and quality of government services.

2. Improve the effectiveness, efficiency and financial health of municipalities.

3. Improve the standards for consumer protection, driver and vehicle safety, tax compliance, information holdings and security and business practices in programs and services offered by the Department.

4. Emerge as an employer of choice, known for developing staff and providing a motivating work environment.

This Report is organized in the following manner. An overview of the major achievements of the Department are introduced and discussed in the context of the general mandate of the Department e.g. to improve service and assist municipalities. Following the overview, specific achievements under each priority item (highlighted in bold type) contained in the 2003-04 SNSMR Business Plan are provided. Significant items not identified in the Business Plan are also presented in this Section.

Achievements made in one very important component of the Department's operations - its staff development - are then outlined in a subsequent Section. This specific area is given special attention because of its importance to the Department's future and due to their longer-term nature, as distinct from the priorities identified earlier which are typically achieved within a year or two. This discussion is followed with a financial summary of the Department's 2003-04 budget allocation, its actual spending and the reasons for any variances. A summary of the funded staff employed by the Department is also provided. The Performance Measurement section outlines the evolution of this craft in the Department and the measures themselves are presented along with the most recent data available (typically 2003-04 data). Appendix 1 provides a reconciliation in the performance measures used between 2003-04 and 2004-05.

Summary of Accomplishments

Since its inception in 2000, the Department has initiated many new services, program enhancements and technical advancements. These activities have resulted in satisfaction levels as expressed by our customers that are very high in absolute terms and based on past research compare quite favourably with other service providers in the public sector.

Many of the major initiatives of the Department have been implemented or are well underway. Thus progress, while evident, is no longer increasing in large increments. Rather progress is now occurring in a methodical and steady manner. Nonetheless, SNSMR made substantial strides during the year in each of its main mandate areas - service delivery, assisting municipalities and protecting the public. In simple terms, the Department is currently evaluating the progress it has made to date, planning where it wants to go with the next round of improvements and setting the stage to launch a number of new and exciting developments during the next year or so.

One of the key mandates of the Department is to provide easy and efficient access to high quality services offered by SNSMR on behalf of the government. The Department has once again scored very well in terms of providing satisfactory service to its customers in the core service areas in which staff interact with consumers such as the Call Centres and Access Nova Scotia locations. The Department was able to surpass its target of 90% in overall customer satisfaction in 2003-04. This achievement was reinforced by an improved level of client satisfaction within the assessment service which manages the assessment roll on behalf of municipalities of the province. Satisfaction levels in that service improved to 74%.

The Department also exhibited a strong level of performance in terms of its other service levels during the fiscal year. The Service Delivery Division managed to serve approximately 74% of its customers within 10 minutes and answer in-coming phone calls within 20 seconds 76% of the time, despite a considerable reduction in its staffing levels. The Division was able to achieve this through consistently attentive forecasting of customer demand, as well as careful and efficient deployment of all categories of staff.

Starting in December, 2003, the new land registration system was rolled out to seven more counties, thereby providing citizens in those counties with access to guaranteed title. These seven counties are in addition to Colchester County, where the process began a year earlier. The new system was enhanced with the implementation of scanning so that land registration documents can now be

viewed online. As well, the new technical platform was installed in most of the registry offices province-wide. Slightly less than one per cent of the total number of land parcels located in Nova Scotia have now been converted to the new system. In Colchester County the figure is approximately eight per cent. It is expected that it will take up to fifteen years to convert all the land parcels in Nova Scotia.

Just as important to the Department's mandate as service delivery is the need to ensure that the Province's common interests with its 55 municipal units are promoted. A number of accomplishments were recorded in the past year in this area including progress on the performance indicators project for municipalities and facilitating more e-government by municipal governments with their customers. In terms of municipal services and infrastructure, half of the provinces 18 counties now have inclusive transportation programs in place and eight rural community transportation services were funded by the Department in 2003-04. Four additional Municipal Drinking Water Supply Protection Plans were developed during the year to bring the provincial total to over 20. In addition, the first installment of provincial assistance towards the Halifax Harbour Solution Project (harbour clean-up) got underway.

In terms of consumer protection, amendments were passed to the *Collection Agencies Act* to harmonize prohibited collection practices with those agreed to by all provinces. Corresponding amendments, where appropriate, were made to collection practices under the *Consumer Creditors' Conduct Act*. Amendments to the *Consumer Protection Act* passed in 2002 to make online shopping safer for consumers were brought into force in 2003-04. They impose conditions on the form of internet sales contacts and define circumstances when a contract may be cancelled. Progress was also reported in terms of on line authentication of documents. SNSMR officials were actively involved in a federal-provincial-territorial working group on Identity Authentication and Authorization. This will lead to aligning authentication and digital signature regulations under the *Business Electronic Filing Act* with emerging national and international standards.

It is also important to note that several accomplishments were made in addition to those items identified in the Business Plan. For example, the Department worked closely with 42 municipalities to deliver the assessment roll electronically to the municipal units. Also, early in the new fiscal year the Department began issuing conservation licence plates and started the process of developing specialty plates for motorists wishing to purchase a distinct plate of their own.

A more detailed discussion of the 2003-04 achievements of the Department is provided below, organized by the core business and priorities that the Department stated it would undertake in its 2003-04 Business Plan.

4. DEPARTMENT ACHIEVEMENTS - PRIORITIES FOR 2003-2004

Core Businesses

1. Program Management and Corporate Services (PMCS)

The following priorities were intended to improve program standards in the areas of driver behaviour and vehicle safety and security around internet purchases, enhancing the level of

compliance in several program areas, and reducing underground economic activity and illegal activities related to tobacco.

- **Promote a number of regulatory and program initiatives to improve driver behaviour and vehicle safety including new commercial carrier safety rating and collision reporting systems, implement measures to discourage impaired driving and expand helmet usage.**

During the 2003-04 fiscal year the Department continued to pursue legislation to introduce the installation of ignition interlock devices on all vehicles where the person's drivers license had recently been reinstated from a revocation due a conviction for an alcohol related offense. In addition, more work was done to research regulations which would be required to implement vehicle impoundment legislation passed in 2000.

Commercial carriers continued to be a priority and the Department participated in national discussions to ensure a consistent carrier safety fitness rating. Drafting of a new regulation to reflect the national standard on carrier safety fitness rating was ongoing. Work continued at the national level in the areas of load securement and drivers hours of service.

The Department proposed legislation to remove some of the seat belt exemptions and to enhance the graduated drivers license program. A number of administrative amendments were also proposed as part of the packages.

Driver inattention continues to be a concern of the Department and reviewing of international research related to the topic is an ongoing activity. In addition, legislative initiatives of various jurisdictions are being monitored and considered for adoption by Nova Scotia.

A review of the regulations concerning driver training schools continued during this period and several drafts of a new regulation where reviewed and enhanced. The Motor Vehicle Inspection Program continues to be monitored and proposed regulation changes are being considered.

The Department completed two phases of the Collision Management System which identified the system and business requirements for the new application. New capabilities were also added to the Interprovincial Motor Vehicle Records Exchange to electronically allow the close out of drivers and vehicles in other Canadian jurisdictions. In support of Government's plan to ease insurance rates, the Department initiated changes to the registration process of motor vehicles by requiring proof of insurance to be provided.

- **Develop a number of legislative and regulatory initiatives in the consumer protection field including proposals related to motor vehicle dealer licensing, and consultations for possible updating and improvements related to funeral services and cemeteries.**

A set of proposals was developed in conjunction with three motor vehicle dealer associations in the province to amend the regulations under which motor vehicle dealers operate and are licensed. Views on the proposed amendments were collected by means of a survey of all dealers and consultation sessions in nine locations across the province.

Amendments were passed to the *Collection Agencies Act* to harmonize prohibited collection practices with those agreed to by all provinces. Corresponding amendments, where appropriate, were made to collection practices under the *Consumer Creditors' Conduct Act*. Amendments to the regulations to the *Collection Agencies Act* need to be made before the new prohibited practices are proclaimed

Amendments to the *Consumer Protection Act* passed in 2002 to make online shopping safer for consumers were brought into force in 2003-04. They impose conditions on the form of internet sales contacts and define circumstances when a contract may be cancelled.

Work on improving legislation pertaining to funeral services and cemeteries was deferred due to resource limitations.

- **To improve tenant-landlord relations, a number of initiatives will be pursued including possible amendments to security deposit provisions under the Residential Tenancies Act, improving information available to landlords and tenants on their responsibilities and encouraging the use of mediation for dispute resolution.**

In the Residential Tenancies program, staff education activities have focused on ensuring that landlords and tenants receive consistent information about their rights and responsibilities regardless of their information source. This has been achieved through formal workshops and informal communication channels as issues arise. Policies and procedures were, and are, developed as necessary to ensure consistency in program delivery.

Other accomplishments include the development of an information booklet for mobile home park landlords and tenants, and the development of a plan and documents to provide students with relevant and timely information on renting residential premises. Amendments to the Residential Tenancies Regulations remain under consideration.

- **Legislative and regulatory amendments are required to provide a better framework for the registration of businesses. This will include identifying amendments to the *Business Electronic Filing Act* to improve security and authentication requirements for e-government and consideration of amendments to the *Companies Act* to address outdated requirements and to the *Cooperative Associations Act* dealing with, among other things, issuance of preferred shares.**

Accomplishments in developing the framework for registration of businesses included completion of a Departmental policy framework for on-line authentication. SNSMR officials were actively involved in a federal-provincial-territorial working group on Identity Authentication and Authorization. This will lead to aligning authentication and digital signature regulations under the *Business Electronic Filing Act* with emerging national and international standards. There was also analysis and discussions with the Government of Canada regarding use of secure channel authentication technology.

In collaboration with Nova Scotia Barristers' Society, issues were identified relating to the *Companies Act* and related legislation requiring amendments. A call for proposals was issued for

a discussion paper that will form the basis for broader consultations.

- **To combat an expected increase in illegal activity associated with tobacco smuggling, the Division will closely monitor wholesale shipments to retail sales in Nova Scotia and will initiate audits on tobacco wholesalers in Canada. These efforts will also be coordinated with other provincial administrations as well as national organizations such as the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) and the RCMP in their efforts to reduce the amount of illegal tobacco trade.**

Tobacco taxes have increased a number of times over the past three years, the latest increase occurring on March 17, 2004 with cigarette taxes increasing by $5.00 per carton. Government is taking a proactive approach to reduce concerns over possible illegal tobacco activities. By consistently requiring taxes to be remitted on the inventories, this has prevented large scale advance purchases of tobacco products at lower prices. Tobacco volumes are down approximately 22% from 2000-01, with the larger decreases in cigarette consumption partly offset by shifts to lower cost tobacco sticks and fine cut tobacco. The Canadian Tobacco Steering Group has undertaken efforts to monitor illegal tobacco activities and enhancing tobacco markings. In addition, government is jointly working with law enforcement agencies, CRA and other jurisdictions to monitor illegal tobacco activities.

- **A long term strategy is required to reduce the size of the underground economy which will in turn increase the amount of taxes collected by the Province and provide for a more level playing field for businesses that play by the rules. In addition, discussions will begin with the Department of Education to address this matter through the high school curriculum.**

The Province worked with CRA on local and national Underground Economy (UE) committees. The NS-CRA UE Committee conducted one town visitation with the objective of educating the business community as to their legislative requirements and to obtain leads for further investigation. A joint NS-CRA tobacco working group has continued to work together to address tobacco tax avoidance schemes.

In addition, the Province is a partner in the National Underground Economy Working Group, a joint Provincial-Federal initiative to develop strategies and action plans to identify and address issues on UE. A public opinion survey was conducted in 2002 and 2003. It has identified six different tax compliance segments and provides detailed measures of the socio-cultural values exhibited by each segment. Understanding the detailed measures and socio-cultural values for each segment has implications for the strategies used by tax administration to address non-compliance. The National Underground Economy Working Group has also developed a high school learning unit on Responsible Citizenship and the Canada's Tax System. Pilot testing in three provinces began in 2003-04. Discussions with the Department of Education to introduce this into the high school curriculum will begin in 2004-05.

2. Service Delivery

The Service Delivery Division provides the majority of the direct interaction with customers on behalf of the Department. The Division is responsible for the Department Call Centre and Access Nova Scotia and Registry of Motor Vehicle offices across the province, along with provision of e-services for customers. The following priorities are intended to improve the quality of service delivery by increasing the utilization of existing physical locations, improving staff training, and by expanding e-service options.

- **Identify and develop services feasible for electronic service delivery. This includes the implementation of online applications allowing for the ordering of personalized plates, the payment of outstanding fines and the verification of liens registered to vehicles**

A new service allowing clients to pay motor vehicles fines over the internet was implemented. This service provides an additional level of convenience to those customers who want alternative ways to deal with various payments they need to make and compliments the service provided online by the Halifax Municipal Municipality for the payment of parking tickets.

Design work was completed for a new electronic service for clients to request personalized plates over the Internet. The division has been investigating the most effective way to implement this service and it is expected that this work will be completed in the 2004-2005 fiscal year.

Development work was completed for the Lien Check service which will allow clients to perform searches of personal property over the internet. This service was developed in coordination with the other Atlantic Provinces using the Atlantic Canada Online service and is expected to be made available to clients in the first quarter of 2004-2005.

- **Forecast and monitor customer demand and operational priorities and deploy staff appropriately to achieve service level standards**

The Service Delivery Division realized a strong performance during the 2003-2004 fiscal year with respect to achievement of service level targets. In an effort to reduce total divisional operating expenditures for the year, the Service Delivery Division lowered labour expenditures for casual employees by more than 11%, while still managing to serve approximately 74% of customers within 10 minutes. Further, approximately 90% of customers indicated they were satisfied with the Division's delivery of services, confirming the Division's successful year. The Division was able to achieve this through consistently attentive forecasting of customer demand, as well as careful and efficient deployment of all categories of staff.

- **Lead the Website Improvement Project by chairing the Steering Committee. Identify opportunities to make improvements to the website governance model, design and branding, content management and technical systems. The focus for this fiscal year will be implementing the SAP Portal System, allowing for enhanced navigation and presentation of the website.**

The Website Improvement Project was initiated in May 2002. The mandate of the project was to develop a coordinated and sustainable approach to website governance, organization, and management. The initiative was sponsored by several Deputy Ministers to reinforce the importance of this initiative.

The majority of the project work was completed between May 2002 and March 2003. In addition to the governance model definition, significant progress was made on completing a number of the "quick hits" which were identified in the early stages of the project: Specific accomplishments are as follows:

- Improved communication and understanding of website management issues among Deputy Sponsors, Steering Committee, and work team members
- Definition of a metadata standard (standard to describe web-based information and content) to improve searching and indexing of web pages
- Implementation of the "Ask Joe Howe" search engine, which has dramatically improved accessibility of web information for clients
- Input to reorganizing the government home page from focus group activities and improved placement of many web services
- Implementation of a "How Do I Find?" function that provides an improved program and services directory of government web information
- Implementation of on-line customer survey capability
- Implementation of an analysis and reporting tool for broken links to improve the reliability of the government website for clients
- Created web templates for use by departments in implementing a new website look and functionality

In 2003-2004, the Website Improvement Project was successful in supporting the implementation of many positive improvements to the government website, and in obtaining approval from Deputies and the Business and Technology Advisory Committee (BTAC) for a governance model and organization structure. However, budget funding to support the establishment of the Internet Services group was not available, and the project was not able to proceed with establishing the governance operational model. As the governance model was considered critical for any further progress, it was therefore appropriate to end the project during the fiscal year.

- **Service Delivery wishes to commence a review, in collaboration with Registry and Information Management Services (RIMS) and PMCS, of business services and to identify areas for improvement. The initial focus will be on preparing a scope definition for the initiative and identifying the phases of work to be completed. Once complete, the Department will catalog current business services, and analyze and define services feasible to be delivered through each service delivery channel (in-person, Internet, mail, Interactive Voice Response).**

The Department made progress in reviewing its delivery of service to business. A key component of this activity was participation in the national Taking Care of Business survey. The Department received the results from the survey in late 2003-2004, and has been reviewing the findings. The information obtained from the survey results will assist the Department in tailoring its service

delivery processes to meet the needs of business in Nova Scotia.

In 2003-2004, the Department also made specific progress on reviewing delivery of the Registry of Joint Stock Companies program. The review and progress was focused on governance and communications. A Department work team has been established to continue work on this initiative in 2004-2005.

3. Alternative Program Delivery (APD)

The APD division was created to provide a focal point for the assessment, evaluation and implementation of alternative program delivery arrangements, typically between SNSMR and another partner organization(s). In an on-going effort to identify potential alternative program delivery projects, the Division establishes and maintains constructive relationships with other line departments, central departments, municipalities and the federal government.

- **Implement an Alternative Program Delivery marketing strategy to raise the level of awareness of services available to client departments and engage them in partnerships for improved service.**

A strategy, with associated approach and methodology, was developed by the Division to increase awareness and understanding of APD options across government. The strategy is being used to build the confidence of stakeholders with regards to the ability of the Department to enter into successful APD/Partnering arrangements.

To this end, in 2003-/04, the APD division actively engaged a number of interested departments in an on-going dialogue on Alternative Service Delivery or ASD.

Following up on an ASD "Communications Audit" that was conducted in 2002-03, the Division made a number of presentations to Deputies, Departmental Senior Management Teams, IT and Finance Directors on partnership opportunities around Licensing and Collections. The Division also hosted a series of ½-day workshops on ASD which provided a better understanding of the climate for ASD in the public service; examined significant Nova Scotia experiences with ASD; and led to the development of "tools and techniques" to support ASD initiatives. One such tool is a handbook on establishing partnerships to pursue integrated/shared service delivery (I/SSD) opportunities. The handbook will be distributed in 2004.

- **Lead several initiatives in cooperation with other divisions and departments to improve service to citizens and business such as:**

    - **Single window access for provincial and federal government services related to death (the Bereavement/Compassion Project).**

The APD Division continued to partner with a number of federal departments in the Bereavement/Compassion Service Clustering Project - an initiative to identify ways to improve access to government's programs and services required in the event of a death.

Previously, this multi-stakeholder initiative developed a formal terms of reference and a detailed work plan. Also, extensive research and information gathering was done as a prelude to consultation with the funeral industry and the citizens of Nova Scotia. In 2002-03, a government-wide scan was conducted to identify those services that should be included within the scope of the project and focus groups were conducted with the general public on the opportunity.

In 2003-04, information obtained from focus groups was used to support an initiative to package government services around major "life-events" over the internet. The "bereavement" life-events bundle is now available on the internet.

- **Deliver more licences through the Nova Scotia Business Registry, including elevators and lifts licences for the Department of Environment and Labour and online licence renewals for other departments within the next two years.**

Four initiatives were undertaken in this matter by the APD Division during 2003-04. The APD Division expanded a partnerships with the Public Safety Division, NS Department of Environment and Labour to deliver Elevators and Lifts licences. It held discussions with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries to determine what partnership opportunities exist for SNSMR to provide licensing services on their behalf. The Division prepared and submitted a proposal to deliver Tourist Accommodation Licenses on behalf of the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage. It also prepared and submitted a proposal to deliver the Seniors Property Tax Rebate Program on behalf of the Department of Community Services.

- **Evaluate an industry self-regulated organization for automobile dealer licensing by developing and advancing enabling legislation;**

In 2003-04, the APD division participated in stakeholder consultations on proposed policy and program changes to redesign Motor Vehicle Dealer Licensing. The evaluation of automobile dealer licensing will involve further consultation with industry and policy experts within the Department.

- **Work with several public service organizations within the Cape Breton Regional Municipality to identify opportunities to partner on common services and infrastructure.**

The APD division has an on-going role in the facilitation of the Partners in Public Service (PIPS) initiative. This partnership arrangement includes nine organizations working together to identify opportunities to achieve economies of scale by leveraging and/or sharing service delivery infrastructure(s) in the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM).

In 2003-04, a number of opportunities were identified where it may be beneficial to establish collaborative partnerships to effect efficiencies and cost savings. Also, a new governance and administrative structure to approve projects was prepared and presented to executive stakeholders.

The outcomes from this initiative has been substantially delivered. An on-going dialogue among the partners has been established and mechanisms have been developed to understand the groups expertise and capacity to leverage opportunities (e.g. bulk purchasing and other collaborative

tendering efforts).

- **Enhance the transparency, fairness and usefulness of Assessment information by undertaking a number of initiatives that will allow municipal units, department staff and the public to access information by enhancing web technology.**

This initiative resulted in enhancements to the Division's internal access site for analysis and inquiry purposes and the launch of an employee portal to allow staff easy access to online tools.

4. Municipal Services

The following priorities were intended to provide high quality advice and support to municipalities to assist them in becoming more effective and efficient in their operations, improve their financial viability, and encourage sustainable development.

- **In cooperation with municipalities, developed a performance indicator rating system for all 55 municipalities in the past year. In order to assist municipalities to improve their performance in the rating system, the Division will promote the use of the system within municipalities, encourage municipalities to share best practices among themselves, and work with municipalities to broaden the breadth and usefulness of the rating system.**

The purpose of this initiative is to assist municipalities in Nova Scotia to better understand their own internal environment, the changes which are taking place in the external environment and the relationship between the two.

The 41 indicators are organized into four streams: finance, community, governance and general performance. Data is collected by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and made available publicly through the Department's website. The Municipal Indicators Program will, among other things, facilitate comparisons between municipalities and, it is hoped, encourage the identification and implementation of best practices to improve municipalities' efficiency and effectiveness. As the initiative progresses, these indicators will facilitate a more strategic approach to municipal policy making at both the provincial and municipal levels.

The indicators are currently being reviewed and revised to reflect changes in the way municipalities report their financial information as a result of recent changes to the Public Sector Accounting Board guidelines. This Department has been working with municipalities to assist them in meeting the new requirements in a timely fashion. Municipal data is currently being gathered and compiled for inclusion on the indicators website for municipalities to access and utilize in benchmarking and best practices initiatives in the near future.

- **Further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of municipal operations, provide greater levels of service to the public, and maintain its current position as one of the leading provinces in e-government, the Division will continue to support the implementation of e-government services in municipalities, by establishing pilot projects in those communities that wish to lead the process, and by sponsoring**

workshops on the development of basic and advanced sites.

Moving to e-Government has the potential to transform and improve the relationship between citizens and their municipal representatives and staff. E-Government services can increase customer participation in municipal activities, provide better and more information to customers, make transactions more efficient and make it easier for citizens to access services. The move to e-Government enables municipalities to raise their delivery methods to the level that citizens have come to expect by virtue of their dealings with the private sector.

During 2003-04 Municipal Services held a workshop at the AMA Conference on the on-line electronic survey service being provided to all municipalities by the province. The e-Government Joint Venture Committee has commenced two pilot projects with the development of strategies for electronic council chambers and on-line parking ticket payments for the municipalities. The Province also prepared a website template, which has been used by a number of municipalities.

- **Build on the progress made in the previous year in support of sustainable development by: facilitating and supporting the implementation of new community based inclusive transportation systems; support the completion of additional municipal drinking water supply protection plans in municipalities; and, commit a further 20% (to a total of 95% committed) of funding under the Canada/Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program.**

Community Based Inclusive Transportation Systems
As of March 31, 2004 there were 9 counties out of a total of 18 that had inclusive transportation services operating within their boundaries and the Province committed $364,195 toward 8 rural community transportation services.

Municipal Drinking Water Supply Protection Plans
This program had funded three studies to improve the protection of the drinking water of Nova Scotians. Since the programs inception two years ago, twenty projects have been funded.

Canada/Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program
There were 113 projects approved under the program, with a total value in excess of $167.1 million (85.3% of total program value). The Provincial commitment under the program for fiscal year 2003-04 was $9,260,000. The majority of the funding is directed toward green projects, designed to ensure effective wastewater management and safe drinking water. The federal, provincial and municipal levels of government each invest one-third of the cost of a project.

- **Contribute $32 million to the Halifax Harbour Solutions Project which includes two pieces of property in Dartmouth valued at $2 million, over 15 years. Payments in any year will be contingent on budgetary approval and expenditures made by HRM. The Province will also be providing financial support to similar projects in Sydney, Lunenburg and other locations in the future under the Canada-Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program.**

Work on the collection system for the Halifax Regional Municipality harbour cleanup project started in fiscal year 2003-04. Progress was made on the land transfer that constitutes part of the provincial

commitment to the project. The first of the 15 installments of $2.0 million each year was made in late March, 2003.

The current estimate is that the Harbour Solution Project will be completed in about 4 years at a cost of approximately $333 million. HRM is financing the project through the federal-provincial funding ($60 million and $30 million respectively) and through two borrowings: $110 million from the Municipal Finance Corporation (MFC) and $20 million from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. The balance will be paid from HRM's pollution control reserves and any additional levies.Provincial partnership with the HRM in the Harbour Solution Project is firm and fully expected to continue into the future.

The new Lunenburg sewage treatment plant was completed and work on the Sydney harbour cleanup project was ongoing with collection completed and work started on the sewage treatment plant.

- **Promote the use of, and provide support for inter-municipal partnerships as a means for municipalities to improve effectiveness and efficiency**.

The Department undertook an inventory of the type and numbers of inter-municipal partnerships in Nova Scotia municipalities and has established strong baseline data. To encourage more partnerships it released a Handbook on Inter-Municipal Partnership and Cooperation for Municipal Government in November, 2003 (with an abbreviated version placed in the Local Government Resource Handbook). In conjunction with this release, SNSMR hosted a workshop on cooperation with the Association of Municipal Administrators. These documents and the workshop were developed to assist municipalities in undertaking voluntary cooperative projects.

The Department also agreed to cost share in a partnership study for the Town of Amherst and Cumberland County. The study is looking at all of the services offered by the two municipalities to determine what opportunities exist to provide them cooperatively. These may include joint boards, lead municipality providing services for a fee, combined municipal departments, revenue sharing, boundary smoothing, etc. As part of the project, a Best Practices Guide will be prepared and distributed to all municipalities. The work will be completed in the fall of 2004.

- **Joint consultation with municipalities regarding provincial-municipal relations. The objective of this initiative is to develop a set of principles to guide provincial-municipal relations and to identify a series of concrete actions which might be taken to strengthen the relationship**.

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities have embarked on a process to improve the municipal provincial relationship. After a series of sessions with municipal and provincial officials facilitated by consultants, a report was submitted to the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) and the Province in June, 2003.

A draft Memorandum of Understanding to guide the provincial municipal relationship has been prepared and further action is now under consideration.

- **The Division will be devoting considerable effort in the coming year towards an**

initiative designed to make SAP the financial software platform of choice for municipalities.

Partnerships between the Provincial Government and municipalities are resulting in the production of enhanced IT solutions in the area of financial accounting, administration and reporting and geographic information systems. The SAP financial software system, is being enhanced with the development of water utility and property tax billing modules. The addition of these modules will make the system more functional for municipal governments.

5. Registry and Information Management Services

Delivers four programs on behalf of the Department including geographic information services, property registration, information management services and business and consumer registrations. The Division also leads two strategic reform initiatives, the Registry 2000 project and the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR). The following priorities were intended to improve registration processes, to enhance quality, access and security to the Department's data and information holdings, and to enable sharing of data among other government departments and agencies.

- **Expand implementation of the new land registration system which guarantees ownership and provides electronic access to land information that is based on parcel location rather than people's names. The experiences gained through the initial implementation site in Colchester County will be reviewed and an implementation plan for province wide roll-out will be developed. Several more counties will implement the system in 2003-04, providing improved electronic access to land information including municipal tax data, civic addresses and Crown land information.**

The implementation of the new land registration system in Colchester County was reviewed and business processes were analyzed to ensure that system and procedural improvements could be made prior to a wider implementation of the new system. Starting in December, 2003, the new land registration system was rolled out to seven more counties, thereby providing citizens in those counties with access to guaranteed title. The new system was enhanced with the implementation of scanning so that land registration documents can now be viewed online. As well, the new technical platform was installed in most of the registry offices province-wide. Expanded access was provided to land related data through linkages to the tax data of several municipalities. Steps were taken to add linkages to the civic address file and to display a "Crown Lands Layer", which is a graphical representation of the approximate location of lands that are believed to be owned by the Crown in right of the Province of Nova Scotia. The Crown Lands Layer is based on information contained in the Provincial Crown Lands Record Centre and is intended to be used only as an indicator of possible Crown interest in land.

- **Expand the number of licences, permits, registrations and certifications that business can complete through the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR). This involves developing the appropriate technical development capacity and back office procedures to work with existing and new participating partners and program areas, such as Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia (WCB), Department of Environment and Labour (DEL), who wish to use the NSBR**

infrastructure to streamline the licensing requirements of businesses in Nova Scotia. This will include a combination of automation and process improvements. A particular focus will be on the potential of the NSBR infrastructure to offer on-line licence renewal capabilities on behalf of other departments.

The number of licences, permits, registrations and certifications that businesses can complete through the NSBR was expanded in 2003-04 with the addition of the Elevator and Lifts licences from the Department of Environment and Labour. Clients can now search the NSBR, through a data publishing tool, to confirm the licence status of Nova Scotia Driving Instructors. Business cases were developed and analyses were conducted on other projects that will expand the capacity of the NSBR. These new licences and tools will be introduced in 2004-05 and include projects from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage and the Office of Economic Development. Needs assessments have been done on the Power Engineers and Crane Operators for the Department of Environment and Labour. Analysis work has been conducted with the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries and Natural Resources. This analysis work is anticipated to add more licences to the NSBR.

On line renewals for the following program licences, permits, registrations and certifications are available through the NSBR:

- Registry of Joint Stock Companies
- Provincial Tax (Fuel and Tobacco)
- Road Safety
- Financial Institutions
- Fuel Safety
- Elevators and Lifts

- **Implement the first phase of the GeoNOVA portal, in partnership with other provincial departments, municipalities and the federal government, to expand electronic access to geographic information to support program administration and decision making across all levels of government. This includes the implementation of appropriate standards, the provision of more web-based access to geographic information such as the ability to order maps and air photos on line, and an expanded data warehouse for provincial department users to access geographic information directly.**

Much of the 2003-04 activity related to the GeoNova Portal initiative focused on establishing the partnerships, particularly with our Federal "GeoConnections" partner. A final GeoConnections partnership agreement, securing $430K of GeoConnections funding for the GeoNova Portal initiative was signed in January 2004, paving the way for the implementation of the phase 1 projects. The phase 1 GeoNova Portal projects completed by March 31, 2004 included:

- GeoNOVA Portal Release 0.5 (official launch deferred to early 2004-05) which can be accessed at http://geonova.ca/
- Development of a Thematic Atlas
- Development of a Coordinate Transformation Service
- Development of a Web Map Service for the Nova Scotia Topographic Database
- A Security Project outlining securities requirements for the GeoNova Portal

services/applications

Other geographic access applications launched in tandem with and available through the GeoNova Portal included a "Data Locator" application to assist users to identify available digital geographic data for Nova Scotia, a "Data Direct" application for Provincial government users to download primary geographic databases and a "Map Store" for online ordering of hard copy map products.

Consultation with our municipal and provincial partners was a significant focus for 2003-04. A comprehensive three year Data Sharing Agreement was concluded between the Department and the Halifax Regional Municipality and the Cape Breton Regional Municipality. Eight regional meetings, engaging all 55 Municipalities, were conducted to review geographic data access/distribution issues. One provincial stakeholder consultation was also completed.

"Data Discovery" work was initiated in 2003-04 with the hiring of a Metadata Coordinator to catalog geographic data holdings in the Province. This work included a review of the status of Provincial metadata records along with the initiation of collection/reconciliation of these records to a metadata standard. This on-going activity is jointly funded by the Department and GeoConnections.

- **Participate in national initiatives to strengthen the security of Vital Statistics records and ensure electronic sharing of data among authorized agencies as part of national and international efforts to reduce the risk of identity theft. This initiative will depend on the availability of federal funding as no Department funding is allocated to this priority.**

The Vital Statistics Deputy Registrar General continues to act as a contributing member of the Security Committee of the Vital Statistics Council for Canada (VSCC). This committee is developing security standards that can be applied consistently across the Canadian jurisdictions. These security standards are being designed to significantly reduced the risk of identity fraud. VSCC is working with Statistics Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and the CRA on an electronic verification and exchange of vital event data between jurisdictions. This is a pilot project involving several Canadian jurisdictions. Nova Scotia is acting in an advisory role for this project.

The Vital Statistics office was able to enhance its physical security with a number of small improvements. Door locks and hinges were changed, laminate was installed on all ground level windows to prevent access through the windows and the inventory is stored in a more secure manner.

Vital Statistics is also participating in the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Council on Identity in Canada. This Council has a mandate to develop a policy framework on identity in Canada, facilitate implementation of the policy and monitor its effectiveness. The Council has developed a framework that provides the policy parameters for authentication, secure registration and verification of identities in Canada. The purpose is to prevent fraud and identity theft, enhance personal and national security and promote quality service. A policy submission has been prepared for approval of the framework and its associated strategic directions at the federal level.

5. HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT - EMPLOYER OF CHOICE

The Department identified the development of its human resources as an important priority. It wanted to become the employer of choice for current and prospective employees. This initiative was Department-wide in that it impacted all the core businesses of the Department and was supported by all the units of the Department. It was lead in large part by the Human Resource unit in conjunction with the Public Service Commission (PSC). Due to the importance of this matter, a number of priorities were identified..

Human resource development priorities for 2003-04 included:

- **Implement an enhanced performance management system across the Department and review performance incentive options with the PSC.**

The Corporate Performance Management system launched by the PSC was fully implemented in SNSMR. The Department made every effort to comply with the suggested incentive approach.

- **Continue supporting the PSC in completing the classification phase of the management group project and defining the pay component. Also support the PSC in completing the evaluation phase of the Civil Service Bargaining Unit Classification project.**

The management classification project was deferred by the PSC. SNSMR met all requirements of the CSBUCR project - preparing and submitting Job Fact Sheets for all bargaining unit positions.

- **Work with PSC and line management to develop a succession management plan.**

SNSMR (HR CSU), in conjunction with the PSC and drawing on external best practices, developed an outline and preliminary framework for its succession management process.

- **Undertake a comprehensive Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) initiative including program refinement, renewing/establishing OHS policies throughout the Department and facilitating training and development for staff and management.**

The Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) unit of SNSMR undertook several initiatives in 2003-04. Early in the year and as a result of a training gap analysis, OHS mandatory training was provided in various regional and site offices across the province. In order to ensure continuity of training an electronic tracking system database has been selected and implementation is underway for OHS training.

A listing of OHS roles and responsibilities called "Due Diligence at a Glance" was distributed to all employees, managers, committee members, and co-chairs. This point form, one page document provides an excellent, easy to read and reference communication tool for reminding all staff of their roles and responsibilities.

To further enhance the safety culture at SNSMR and to ensure due diligence by all, OHS responsibilities have been incorporated in management and staff job descriptions and in the performance appraisal process.

Progress Reports prepared for fiscal period 2003-04 acknowledge the continuing success of the OHS program and the success of SNSMR's thirteen (13) OHS Committees. Committees continue to meet every two months and provide OHS Meeting Minutes and Monthly Inspection Reports.

- **Conduct an employee survey and report on the results with the aim to address issues identified in the survey.**

The Department regularly surveys its staff on a number of issues, the results of which are then tabulated by division, which allows each division to analyze its results and prepare appropriate responses to be implemented throughout the year. The most recent survey was conducted early in the 2003-04 fiscal year, using an electronic feedback mechanism. Approximately 35% of staff responded to the survey versus 58% response rate to the survey conducted two years previously.

Overall, the results for 2003 were quite positive with over 79% of staff expressing satisfaction with their jobs at SNSMR, up by 2% over the results received in the 2001 survey. These results were presented to Senior Management during the year with the intent that each Executive Director would share the results with their staff, analyze the results for their own divisions and take the necessary steps to address any issues that were raised by the survey.

6. UNPLANNED ACTIVITIES

- **Delivering the assessment roll electronically to the municipal units**

The Alternative Program Delivery Division has signed Memorandums of Understanding with 42 municipal units thus providing more efficient access of assessment data through web based technology.

- **Implementing a web based call centre**

In June of 2003 and January of 2004, APD implemented a web based call centre, which improved the call management process for both the preliminary and formal 2004 assessment roll. In addition, the residential property owners were given detailed information through a personal identification number.

- **Improving the valuation standards**

APD implemented another phase of the Provincial Assessment Inspection Program focusing on the following areas: Dartmouth, Halifax County, Halifax City, Guysborough County, Cape Breton County, Sydney, North Sydney, Inverness County, Richmond County, Colchester County, Cumberland County, Hants East, Bridgewater, Annapolis, Digby District, Hants West and Kings County adding on an additional $48 million to the provincial assessment base.

The Division completed a pilot on the use of multiple regression analysis in the valuation of residential and condominium property owners in the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Division is presently evaluating the use of this approach on a larger scale as it may offer a means to support the current valuation process in certain areas of the province.

- **Establish a public relations strategy to increase the recognition of Nova Scotia as an assessment leader**

The staff of APD participated in and made a number of presentations at both national (Canadian Property Tax Association) and international conferences (International Association of Assessing Officers). In addition, the Division continues with a bench marking study that researches and reports on service levels and standards of assessment products and processes.

7. YEAR END DEPARTMENTAL BUDGET SUMMARY

	2003/04 Estimate ($ Thousands)	2003/04 Actuals ($ Thousands)	2004/05 Estimate ($ Thousands)
Total Program Expenses Gross	$129,543.0	$127,474.8	$132,114
Net Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries	$93,161.0	$90,395.9	$92,352.0
TCA Cash Flow	$750.0	$747.3	$1,304.5
Salaries & Benefits	$44,552.0	$42,731.9	$42,024.0
Funded Staff - Gross FTE's	933.4	870.7	885.2
Funded Staff - Net FTE's	772.4	712.1	722.8

Variance Explanations 2003-04 Estimate to 2003-04 Actuals

Net Program Expenses - Net of Recoveries

Variance ($2,765.1) - resulting from additional savings ($1.3m) achieved through the management of vacancies , departmental operating accounts and grants over and above the savings achieved through the Budget Management Plan ($2.3m). Additional savings were realized in amortization ($950k) as a result of the changes in the Tangible Capital Asset Policy offset by additional spending ($1.8m) in the Canada Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program related to the timing of the completion of approved projects.

Salaries & Benefits

Variance ($1,820.1) - due to vacancy management and normal staff turnover.

TCA Cash Flow

Variance $2.7 - no significant variances

8. DEPARTMENT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

As with the achievements outlined in Section 4 of this document, SNSMR has made significant progress towards the targets it said it would achieve by 2004-05 in terms of its performance measures. These measures represent the quantitative progress that the Department has made towards its strategic goals.

As the Department and its resources continue to evolve, so too the performance measures that the Department uses to quantify its progress for each goal. These measures will no doubt continue to be refined until the right balance between resources and service delivery is achieved.

The performance measures that were identified in the 2003-04 Business Plan have of necessity and through practical experience, changed somewhat for use in the 2004-05 Business Plan, and will no doubt be further refined in future years. The revisions that have been made in the current set of measures underwent less changes than has occurred in previous years. It is anticipated that as the Department's expertise in this area is increased, the number of necessary revisions will diminish.

The presentation that follows provides the performance measures identified in the 2004-05 SNSMR Business Plan that the Department intends to track during the current fiscal year and hopefully achieve by the target year of 2004-05. It has been determined that it would be more useful to present data for these new measures rather than the 2003-04 measures, some of which have been revised or discontinued. A narrative provides the reason for selecting the particular measure, how it is calculated, the most recent data available and where the Department wants to be in terms of each measure in the future. These measures may change again, but it is anticipated that any changes will be kept to a minimum.

Furthermore, for this year's Report, an Appendix 1 has also been prepared to reconcile the changes that have occurred in performance measures between 2003-04 and 2004-05. Comments are provided after each 2003-04 measure to inform the reader on the current status of the measure. Most measures remain the same as stated in 2003-04. In some cases, revisions were made to provide greater precision or clarity to the description of the measure - the substance remains the same. Some other measures have been discontinued because the Department feels better measures of its anticipated outcomes have been identified, or it has been determined with practical experience that the proposed measures could not be easily or cost-effectively measured.

Program Management and Corporate Services:

Ratio of non-adjudicated to adjudicated cases in residential tenancies

The Residential Tenancies Program serves to define, communicate and enforce the rights of landlords and tenants in Nova Scotia. Two primary components of the program are the call centre which answers 50,000 tenancy inquiries each year, and a dispute resolution service where Residential Tenancy Officers mediate and adjudicate disputes between landlords and tenants.

What does the measure tell us?

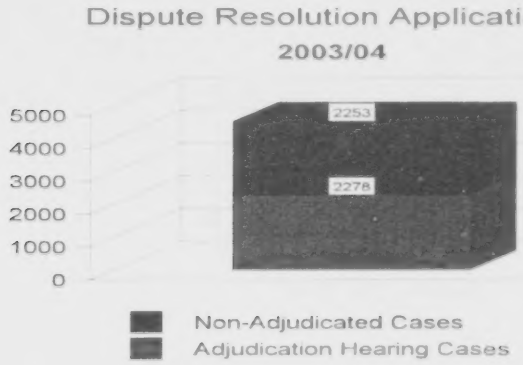
Landlords and tenants who cannot resolve their own disputes apply for mediation and/or adjudication of their conflict. Ideally, disputes are resolved with the least possible amount of intervention by program staff. Non-adjudicated resolutions are those that involve mediation or where an application is withdrawn due to an unmediated agreement or a clearer understanding of rights and responsibilities. Non-adjudicated resolutions often require more resources than adjudicated outcomes do, but the solutions can be more creative and can be in place before the scheduled hearing date even arrives. The ratio of adjudicated to non-adjudicated resolutions is an important indicator of how effectively the residential tenancies program diverts appropriate disputes to low intervention resolutions. This information is drawn from internal SNSMR information.

Where are we now?

2003-04 was the first fiscal year for which this data was collected. In 2003-04, there were 4,531 dispute resolution applications filed under the residential tenancies program. Of these, 2,253 cases were classified as non-adjudicated because they were either mediated or withdrawn. An order resulting from an adjudication hearing was issued in the other 2,278 cases. Thus the ratio of non-adjudicated to adjudicated cases was 0.98.

Where do we want to be in the future?

As this was the first year for which this data is available, it represents a baseline for future years. Being able to set realistic goals for improving the adjudicated/non-adjudicated ratio will require gaining a clearer understanding of what motivates tenants and landlords to mediate versus litigate. A thorough analysis of the factors that contribute to each type of outcome will be necessary to predict how many disputes can be diverted towards non-adjudicated outcomes. This analysis will be undertaken following the establishment of the baseline data from 2003-04.



Number of compliance actions taken against [violations by] regulated industries

The Audit and Enforcement unit assigns staff to promote compliance by businesses operating in industries regulated by the Department. Industries include direct sellers, providers of funeral and cemetery services, lenders, mortgage brokers and lenders, collection agencies and consumer reporting agencies. The risks to consumers in each of these industries warrant regulation. Compliance activity may take the form of an investigation of a complaint or an irregularity in a required filing by a business, or of a routine inspection.

What does the measure tell us?

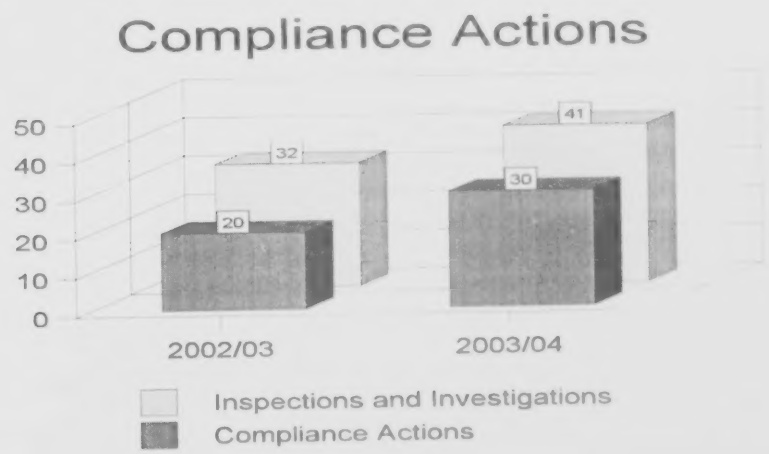
This measure indicates how many inspections or investigations result in compliance actions as a result of violations of the regulations applying to regulated industries. Compliance actions include prosecutions, cancellations or suspensions of licence, permit or registration, issuance of a letter of warning or reprimand, or requests for an assurance of voluntary compliance.

Where are we now?

In 2003-04 there were 30 compliance actions resulting from 41 inspections and investigations. This compares to 20 compliance actions in 2002-03 resulting from 32 inspections and investigations.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The target is for at least 35 investigations/inspections each year. The number of inspections and investigations was very small for several years prior to 2002-03, as a result of a lack of enforcement staff. We anticipate that the number of situations requiring compliance action will be high for the next several years, because businesses of the previous lack of an enforcement presence. The number of compliance actions should drop subsequently as the realization increases that non-compliance is likely to be discovered and penalties imposed.



Source: Internal SNSMR Information

Number of Audits/Inspections Resulting in Unpaid Tax or Other Actions

The Audit and Enforcement section is responsible for administering and enforcing fuel, tobacco and corporate capital tax programs. Enforcement used in select and appropriate situations is a means to promote voluntary compliance with the tax system by taxpayers. Audits, inspections and investigations are used to identify unpaid taxes or result in compliance actions against a non-compliant consumer or taxpayer. Such actions can include criminal charges and prosecutions, letters of warning or reprimand, or suspension or cancellation of a permit or license. The audit and inspection program should target higher risk taxpayers and consumers as opposed to allocating resources on the audit/inspection of lower risk compliant taxpayers/consumers.

What do the measures tell us?

Increasing the number of audits/inspections resulting in unpaid tax or other actions is evidence that more non-compliant taxpayers have been identified.[1] This can be accomplished by increasing the number of audits, inspections and investigations conducted through more efficient deployment of resources. It can also be accomplished through better audit/inspection selection techniques.

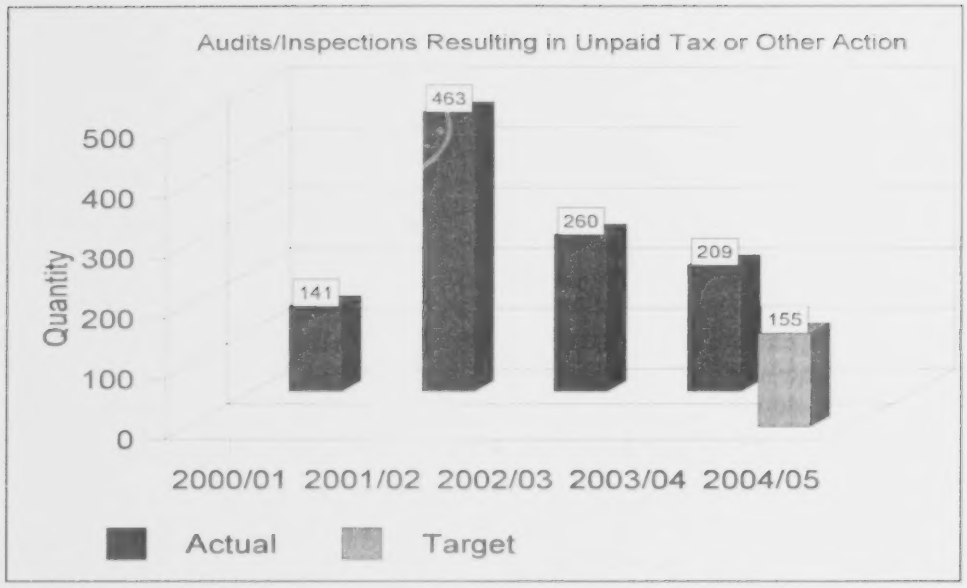
Where are we now?

In 2003-04 there were 209 audits/inspections or investigations that resulted in unpaid tax (94 tax assessments) or other action (115 compliance actions). This compares to 260 in 2002-03 and 463 in 2001-02. The major reason for the higher numbers in the previous two years relate to audits and assessments tied to the tobacco inventory audits that arose from the tax increases over the past two years. These accounted for 143 of the assessments in 2002-03 and 312 of them in 2001-02. There were only 24 such audits in 2003-04. The net number of assessments or other action in 2003-04 was 185 (209-24) as compared to 123 (260-143) in 2002-03. This represents a noticeable increase.

Where do we want to be in the future?

By 2004-05 our goal is to achieve a 10% increase over the 2000-01 base year amount of 141 audits/inspections that resulted in tax assessments or compliance action. That equates to 155 audits/inspections. The unit has cross-trained one more auditor in the IFTA program and the next task is to cross-train an auditor in tobacco tax. Audit and Enforcement is also closely monitoring tobacco tax revenues and activities to identify any illegal activity that may arise due to the tobacco tax increases over the past few years. In addition, funding approval to hire three additional staff has been provided in the 2004-05 year.

1. Other actions is defined as tax assessments or compliance action such as criminal charges and prosecutions, letters of warning or reprimand, and suspension or cancellation of a permit/license.



Source: Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations Audit & Enforcement Section

Actual Tobacco Revenues As A Percentage of Estimates

The Audit and Enforcement section is responsible for administering and enforcing fuel and tobacco tax programs. Audit and Enforcement undertakes a variety of administrative, audit, compliance and enforcement activities as well as monitoring to minimize the opportunity to establish illegal distribution networks in the province. In part this is done in collaboration with other jurisdictions and law enforcement agencies. This measure supports the Department goal of advancing the public interest by improving the programs it administers and the outcome of optimizing revenues to the Province.

What do the measures tell us?

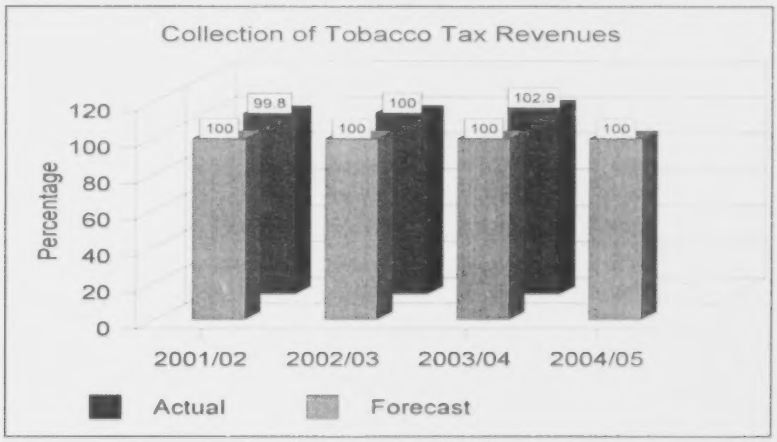
At the beginning of each fiscal year tobacco tax revenues are forecasted by the Department of Finance. The Audit and Enforcement section is responsible to ensure these revenues are realized other than for adjustments related to consumption decreases. This measure determines the amount actually collected at the end of the fiscal year versus the forecast. Any variance other than legitimate changes in consumption would be an indication that smuggling or some type of tax evasion scheme is occurring.

Where are we now?

In 2003-04 actual tobacco tax revenues exceeded the forecast by 2.9%. Tobacco tax revenues collected exceeded the forecast of $157,132,000 by just over $4.5 million. This larger than expected variance is partially the result of the forecast not being adjusted for the March 17, 2004 tobacco tax increase.

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2004-05 the Department is estimating it will collect $180,217,000 in tobacco tax revenues. The target is to collect at least 100% of the forecast each year of the forecast period. In 2004-05 the forecast has been increased from the actual amount collected in the previous year due to the tobacco tax increase in March, 2004.



Source: Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations Audit & Enforcement Section

Reduction in Underground Economy (UE)

The National Underground Economy Working Group is a joint Provincial-Federal initiative to develop strategies and action plans to identify and address issues on the underground economy. A joint Public Opinion Research project has been set up that will establish a base-line measure of Canadians' awareness, attitudes, and behaviour regarding tax compliance and, in particular, the underground economy. It will provide a basis upon which to measure or refine the development and delivery of strategies, including communication, education, and enforcement regarding the underground economy.

What do the measures tell us?

The public opinion survey identifies six different tax compliance segments and provides detailed measures of the socio-cultural values exhibited by each segment. Understanding the detailed measures and socio-cultural values for each segment has implications for the strategies used by tax administration to address non-compliance. Tax administration employs three broad clusters of strategies to address non-compliance including various forms of communication to educate, simplify and facilitate; administrative control mechanisms, including withholdings, matching and third party reporting; and finally targeted enforcement.

Where are we now?

Surveys were conducted in 2002 and 2003. The second survey has validated the results of the 2002 survey and six different compliance segments have been identified. The tax compliance segmentation for 2003 shows there has been little change in the sizes of the segments, but there has been a certain polarization in terms of compliance attitudes. The altruistic and deferent compliers continue to strongly oppose tax cheating and display very high levels of everyday ethics. On the other hand, all the other segments display a somewhat more pronounced set of motivations to non-comply in 2003 than they did in 2002. Work has now begun on sharing the results of this research as well as the implications on strategies to deal with non-compliance.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The intent is to conduct the survey in 2005 and then every two years thereafter. The segmentation and detailed measures will be updated and fed into the development of new and ongoing compliance strategies.

Number of Business Licensing Inspections and Audits

The Audit and Enforcement section became responsible for enforcing various business licensing programs in 2001-02. Enforcement used in an appropriate number of instances is an effective means of promoting voluntary compliance within the remaining tax payer population. Audits, inspections and investigations are used to identify non-compliant businesses so that appropriate compliance action may be taken. Such actions can include criminal charges and prosecutions, letters of warning or reprimand, and suspension or cancellation of a permit or license. The audit and inspection program should target higher risk businesses as opposed to allocating resources on the audit/inspection of lower risk compliant businesses.

What do the measures tell us?

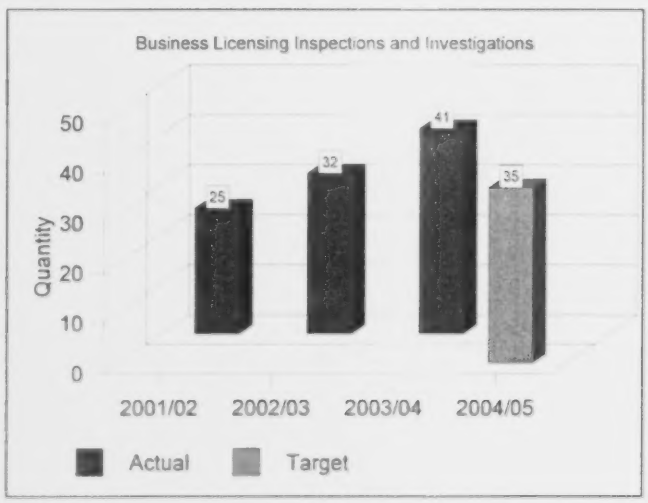
Increasing the number of business licensing inspections and investigations is a good indication that the program has been re-established. An effective enforcement program can identify areas of concern or high risk and may result in various other actions.[2] This will ultimately lead to higher levels of compliance. This can be accomplished by increasing the number of audits, inspections and investigations conducted by assigning additional resources to this program and through more efficient deployment of resources. It can also be accomplished through better audit/inspection selection techniques.

Where are we now?

Re-establishing this program and training additional staff was deemed to be vital if an effective inspection program was to continue. In 2003/04 there were 41 inspections or investigations that resulted in 30 compliance actions. This compares to 32 inspections/ investigations and 20 compliance actions in 2002/03. The reasons for the increase over the past two years relates to the assignment of an additional staff person to this program and that there was a major investigation in 2001/02 that consumed more time than usual.

Where do we want to be in the future?

By 2004-05 the unit's goal is to conduct 35 inspections/ investigations per year. The program was not fully staffed during the past two years and training continues. Further training of other staff within the section in conducting business licensing inspections and investigations will ensure there are adequate resources to monitor and promote compliance with these programs.



Source: Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations Audit & Enforcement Section

[1]Other actions is defined as compliance action such as criminal charges and prosecutions, letters of warning or reprimand, and suspension or cancellation of a permit/license

Improved Road Safety

One of the Departments strategic goals is to advance the public interest by improving the programs that it administers. Road safety is a key program responsibility with the desired outcome a reduction in the number of deaths and injuries (incidents) occurring on the highways. The Department has specific responsibilities for driver, carrier and vehicle safety aspects of road safety. As there are many factors which contribute to collisions, three areas were chosen as sub-measures to further identify progress. These include reduction in drinking and driving, increased seat belt usage, and the improved operation of commercial vehicle carriers.

What do the measures tell us ?

The main measure will compare the number of fatalities and injuries for the period 1996-2001with the period 2008-2010. A reduction in this number will mean less suffering for all Nova Scotians and significant reductions in health care costs and collision settlements. Sub-measures will include specific reductions in fatalities and injuries involving impaired driving, failing to wear a seat belt and collisions involving a commercial vehicle.

Where are we now ?

The average number of fatalities/injuries per year for the period 1996-2001 was 503 and for 2003 the number was 374.

Similarly, the following is the status of the sub-measures:

Sub-Measure	1996-2001	2003
Incidents due to impaired driving	86	64
Incidents due to non-use of seat belts	93	63
Incidents involving commercial vehicles	35	28

Where do we want to be in the future ?

Our target for this measure is to decrease the average number of fatalities/injuries by 30 % for the period 2008-2010 which translates into a reduction of 151 incidents.

Similarly, the following are the targets for each of the sub-measures:

Sub-Measure	1996-2001	2008-2010
Incidents due to impaired driving	86	51
Incidents due to non-use of seat belts	93	56
Incidents involving commercial vehicles	35	28

Source: Provincial Police forces collect this data and SNSMR compiles it.

Debt Collection Revenues

The Collections unit traditionally provided debt collection services for the Provincial Tax Commission. Since the windup of the former Health Services Tax, the unit has developed and administered nine collection programs for seven other departments. The collection unit has the ability to act as the collection agent for departments that do not possess the expertise or resources to collect outstanding debts. This measure supports the Department goal of advancing the public interest by improving the programs it administers and the outcome of optimizing revenues to the Department and the Province.

What do the measures tell us?

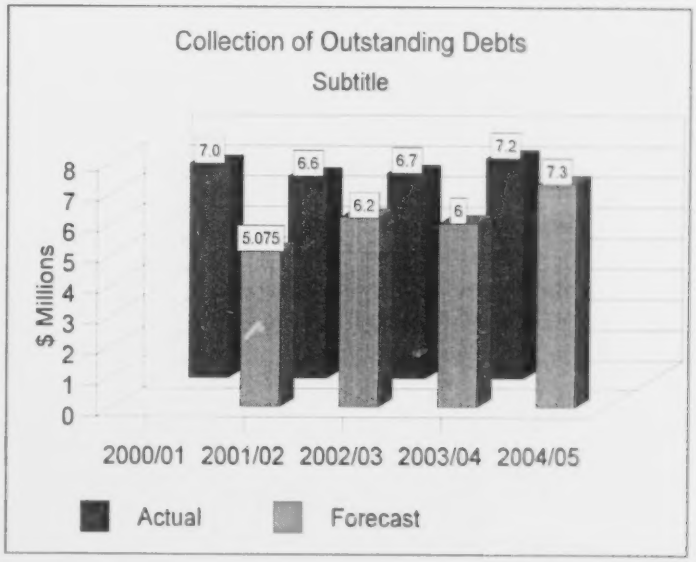
At the beginning of each fiscal year the collections unit forecasts how much of the outstanding accounts receivable (debt) it will collect on based upon all the outstanding debt that has been assigned to the Department. This measure determines the amount actually collected at the end of the fiscal year versus the forecast.

Where are we now?

In 2003-04 the unit collected $7.2 million on outstanding debts of $41 million as at March 31, 2003 versus a forecast of $6 million. Thus the collections unit exceeded the forecast by $1.2 million or just over 20%. The 2003-04 forecast had been reduced from the actual amount collected in the previous year due to a drop in the accounts assigned from the Department of Finance. These receivables traditionally have a recovery rate of 50% as compared to 20% for most other programs. In addition, in 2003-04 the Collection unit monitored $443,000,000 in revenues on behalf of the fuel, tobacco, corporate capital and sales tax programs.

Where do we want to be in the future?

In 2004-05 the Department is estimating it will collect $7.3 million on outstanding debts of $51.5 million as at March 31, 2004. The target is to collect at least 100% of the forecast each year of the forecast period. A corporate collection policy was passed into legislation this year. Through 2004-05, the unit plans to attract new departments/ programs to utilize their collection services. With an increase in the number of programs utilizing the collection services this will lead to greater recoveries across government.



Source: Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations Collection Unit

Service Delivery

Customer Satisfaction

One of Government's six core business areas is Government Services. Government aims to deliver programs and services in ways that are both cost-effective and also improve the quality of services. Maintaining a steady pulse on customers' expectations and experiences with the delivery of government services provides valuable information as to where best to focus attention to continually improve the delivery of services.

What does the measure tell us?

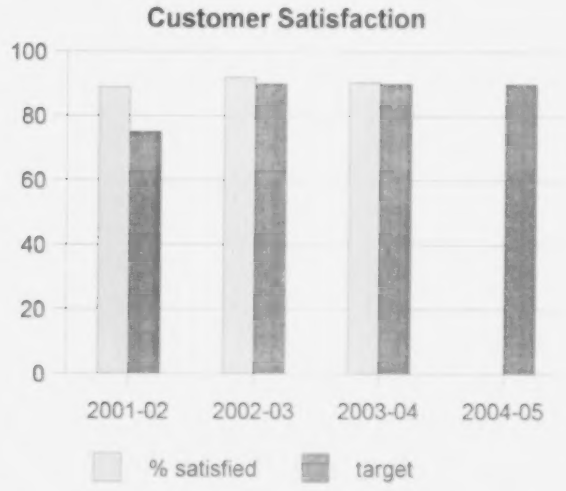
The overall customer satisfaction percentage is a measure that was selected from customer satisfaction surveys performed during the last three fiscal years. Customer satisfaction is a key variable indicating whether Government is achieving its desire to be open and accountable to customer concerns and expectations and to provide responsible, accountable governance.

Where are we now?

Government was able to achieve a level of overall customer satisfaction of slightly greater than 90%, with services offered through Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. This figure includes customers who indicated they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the overall services they received from exit surveys performed during the last quarter of the 2003-04 fiscal year at Access NS and RMV locations.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Government wishes to continue to satisfy its customers and maintain an overall satisfaction rate of 90%.



Source: Internal SNSMR Information

Timeliness of Services

Service Delivery is a core business area of Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations. One of the Department's strategic goals is to improve the accessibility and quality of government services. In order to meet the Department's goal, Service Delivery Division has made it a priority to deploy staff appropriately to meet demand and maintain service levels. It is also a priority to measure and respond to customer satisfaction. Maintaining a pulse on customers' expectations and experiences with the delivery of government services provides the Department with valuable information as to where best to focus attention to continually improve the delivery of services.

What do the measures tell us?

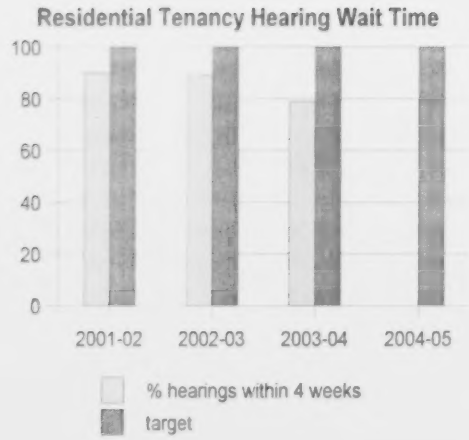
Two measures of customer satisfaction have been selected from customer satisfaction surveys conducted over the past three years. In 2001-02, the survey was conducted by an external organization throughout the year, by visiting various service centres and interviewing customers upon completion of their business. During the past two fiscal years, the survey has been conducted internally. One of the measures selected was timeliness of services. To reflect the importance of this measure across different service channels, the measure has been divided into two service level objectives, one for in-person service and the other for telephone services. As well, two new measures have been added this year; wait times for driver licensing road tests and wait times for residential tenancy hearings. The measure for timeliness of service for the Department's in-person centres has been selected to be the percent of customers who reach the service counter within ten minutes of entering. The measure for timeliness in the Department's Call Centre is the percent of phone calls answered within 20 seconds. The measure for timeliness for driver examination services has been selected to be the percentage of appointments booked within five weeks of the request. The measure of timeliness for residential tenancy services was selected to be percentage of hearings booked within four weeks of the request. The other measure selected from the survey was general/ overall customer satisfaction with the Department's services.

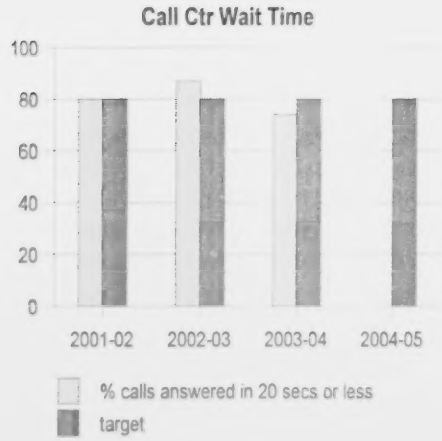
Where are we now?

It was the Department's objective to achieve a 75% incidence of overall customer satisfaction in 2001-02. The target was raised to 90% due to the success realized during the previous year. During the 2003-04 fiscal year, the Department was able to achieve overall customer satisfaction target of 90%. The Department was able to nearly meet its target of answering 80% of phone calls, in the Call Centre within 20 seconds, with an overall grade of service of 76%. The Department continued its strong in-person service by meeting the service level target of 80% of customers served within 10 minutes, 74% of the time. The Department also demonstrated strength in meeting the road test measure of 100% of appointments booked within 5 weeks, during the fiscal year. The actual grade of service was 98%. The Department dipped slightly under the target of 100% of residential tenancy hearings held within four weeks of the request, with an actual grade of service of 79%.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Department wishes to maintain its service level targets for both in-person and telephone service channels, as well as driver examinations and residential tenancy hearings.





Source: Internal SNSMR Information

Customer Satisfaction - Business Customers

The Department has focused quite closely over the years upon measuring customers' level of satisfaction with departmental services; however, these measures have not previously focused upon any specific customer demographic group. Although not identified as a separate measure in the 2003-04 Business Plan, the Department was interested in the level of satisfaction of business customers with the services they received.

What do the measures tell us?

The measure tells us the percentage of business customers who were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the services they received. Measuring satisfaction of business customers specifically allows the Department enhanced information to better focus upon improving services to our business customers. These customers may have different needs than the regular member of the public, which may not be adequately captured if grouped together with all customers of the Department.

Where are we now?

Satisfaction of business clients was not measured separately during the 2003-04 fiscal year.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Department wishes to resume this measurement process and maintain the current satisfaction target of 85%.

Source: Internal SNSMR Information

Registry and Information Management Services

Licencing Requirements Completed Through the Nova Scotia Business Registry

The Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR) is focused on providing one stop access to government services for Nova Scotia businesses, and supports SNSMR's goal of providing streamlined access to quality, client centered government services that are second to none. It supports the Departmental outcome of improved electronic access to Departmental services.

What does the measure tell us?

This measure tells us how effectively the Department provides one stop access to provincial business licensing requirements. It is calculated by the number of businesses who can complete 100% of their business licencing requirements through the NSBR (based on business/industry type) divided by the number of businesses in the province (as registered with the Registry of Joint Stock Companies).

Where are we now?

At the end of March 2004, approximately 32% of Nova Scotia businesses could meet 100% of their business licensing requirements through the NSBR. These were industries that required only Registry of Joint Stock Companies, Workers Compensation Board registration, Financial Institutions licensing, and/or fuel safety licences and permits in order to meet provincial licensing requirements.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Department prepared an "Expanded Licences, Permits, Registrations and Certificates (LPRC) Delivery Strategy" which was anticipated to result in 80% of Nova Scotia businesses able to have their provincial licensing needs met by the NSBR by March 31, 2005. Although more licences have been added to the NSBR, the goal, set in 2001, is not going to be achieved. While a number of licensing possibilities have been explored in depth, development has not yet started on these licences and cannot happen all at once. By the end of 2004-05, the Department will have added Accommodation licences from the Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage, a Tender Opportunities Notification System for Nova Scotia companies looking to conduct business with government and will have analyzed a number of new licensing opportunities. Development for these new licences will have started by the end of the fiscal year but not rolled into production.

New Land Registration System

The Registry 2000 project is implementing changes to improve service delivery and public protection associated with real property. The new land registration system was implemented in Colchester County in March 2003, followed by Antigonish, Cumberland and Pictou in December 2003, and Annapolis, Digby, Hants and Kings in March 2004. The remaining counties will be rolled out during 2004-05 fiscal year.

What do the measures tell us?

The measure demonstrates the number of land registration parcels in the new system divided by the total number of land parcels that exist in the province, expressed as a percentage.

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2004, the Land Registration Act (LRA) was implemented in 8 out of 18 counties. Conversion rates in LRA jurisdictions are shown in the table below.

	Implementation Date	LRA Parcels March 31/04	Total Parcels March 31/04	% Converted March 31/04
Annapolis	2004-03-02	30	20,720	0.1%
Antigonish	2003-12-02	166	13,530	1.2%
Cape Breton	2005-03-02	-	64,257	-
Colchester	2003-03-25	2,581	33,549	7.7%
Cumberland	2003-12-02	377	32,025	1.2%
Digby	2004-03-02	12	25,026	0.0%
Guysborough	2005-03-02	-	13,834	-
Halifax	2004-12-02	-	138,588	-
Hants	2004-03-02	103	25,889	0.4%
Inverness	2005-03-02	-	20,997	-
Kings	2004-03-02	139	34,293	0.4%
Lunenburg	2005-03-02	-	47,575	-
Pictou	2003-12-02	541	31,669	1.7%
Queens	2005-03-02	-	16,843	-
Richmond	2005-03-02	-	12,582	-
Shelburne	2005-03-02	-	15,768	-
Victoria	2005-03-02	-	9,489	-
Yarmouth	2005-03-02	-	22,654	-
Provincial Totals		3,949	579,288	0.7%

Where do we want to be in the future?

The target of an 11% conversion rate by March 31, 2005 is based upon monthly property transaction statistics from 1999, and applying those numbers to the rollout schedule. The ultimate goal is 100% conversion because the province does not plan to maintain two systems indefinitely. A working group has been established to develop migration acceleration strategies. Land Registration will be implemented in all 18 counties by March 2005.

Improve the quality and accessibility of provincial primary geographic information

Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations has been assigned the lead role within government in the provision and maintenance of foundation geographic data sets (otherwise referred to as "primary databases"). The Primary Databases include: the Nova Scotia Topographic Database (NSTDB); the Nova Scotia Property Records Database (NSPRD); the Nova Scotia Coordinate Referencing System (NSCRS); the Nova Scotia Aerial Photography library; the Nova Scotia Civic Address file (NSCAF); and the Nova Scotia Coastal Mapping Series.

What does the measure tell us ?

This measure helps us identify what primary geographic data holdings are actually being delivered to the geomatics community. Accessibility can be further evaluated in terms of informed accessibility (including metadata), and mechanisms to gain access.

Where are we now and where do we want to be in the future ?

Access comes via many strategies including access by way of data sharing agreements and partnerships. In the case of municipal units there are 40 municipal agreements out of a possible 55 now in place. There are more than 20 provincial departments and agencies that may also benefit from such access agreements. All government departments and agencies are covered by the Data Distribution and Pricing Policy. Future data sharing agreements and partnerships are very difficult to determine because of the unknown opportunities in using geographic data.

Access by the general user community can be based upon two target groups - general users and speciality clients. The actual number of geographic data holdings in all of government is unknown. There is a very conservative projection of 400 geographically related datasets in all of government, based in part upon past metadata efforts.

Database	Accessibility Target	Desktop accessibility to date
NSTDB	100%	100%
NSPRD	100%	100%
NSCRS	100%	100% (on CD Rom); 0% (via other means, e.g. web)
Aerial Photography	Photos 100%	Current Photos < 1%
	Air photo lines 100%	Current photos5%
		Client orders 100%
	Center points 100%	Current photos 5%; Client orders 100%
Coastal	100%	base, hard copy 90% ; digital product 0%
NSCAF	18 counties	14 counties for stakeholders; 0 counties for public

Municipal Services:

Municipalities with a satisfactory municipal indicators level of performance

One of the Department's primary goals is to promote the development of efficient, effective and financially healthy municipal governments. This measure will provide the Department with some indication of how municipalities are doing in meeting this need

What does the measure tell us?

The measure will provide a snap shot of relative municipal strength. Data will be compiled for a number of indicators including financial (i.e. debt), community (i.e. population trends), governance (i.e. business planning process), and performance (i.e. number of water main breaks). Over time enough data will be collected that will identify and document trends which will assist municipalities in their decision making processes. These indicators will be useful to Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations in reviewing policy options, and they will also act as an invaluable tool at the municipal level, assisting in the decision making process of municipal councils.

Where are we now?

Due to changes in Public Sector Accounting Regulations updates to the Municipal Indicators website have been delayed. Information on the 2001-2002 data year is currently in development.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Complete the updates to the indicators project to reflect the Public Sector Accounting recommendations and continue to enhance the indicators as required and continue to monitor them.

Municipalities using the Municipal Indicators Initiative to improve performance

One of the Department's goals is to promote the development of efficient, effective and financially healthy municipal governments. This measure will provide the Department with some indication as to how many municipalities are using the indicators to assist in meeting this goal.

What does the measure tell us?

One tool developed to assist municipalities in the decision-making and best practices processes with other municipalities in the Province is the Municipal Indicators Initiative. This measure will provide SNSMR with data on how many municipalities are using the indicators to develop best practices in their strategic planning, and provide insight as to how the indicators may be further developed to expand their usefulness.

Where are we now?

The calculation of individual indicators is being reviewed in order to comply with recent changes in the Public Sector Accounting Board recommendations. Until the review is complete and sufficient data has been compiled, additional information cannot be posted on the website.

Where do we want to be in the future?

Complete the updates to the indicators project to reflect the Public Sector Accounting Recommendations and continue to enhance the indicators as required and monitor them. When sufficient data has been collected, best practice levels will be determined and discussions with municipalities will take place concerning how the indicators are being used.

E-government Framework Established

"E-Government"covers a wide range of functions and services that a government provides by electronic means, by telephone, internet, world wide web, etc. This can range from the very basic to the very sophisticated, where this range can include: the provision of information on the municipality, e.g history, council members, recreation programs; the ability to download information, forms and by-laws; the ability to make inquiries and receive responses; and complete business transactions such as register for programs, obtain permits, make payments etc.

What does the measure tell us?

It will become an indicator of the effectiveness and efficiency of the municipality.

Where are we now?

Research has indicated Nova Scotia municipalities rate very well in the area of e-government when compared to the rest of Canada. A number of Nova Scotian municipalities and the Association of Municipal Administrators expressed an interest in working with SNSMR to maintain this lead in e-government, and to venture further in the provision of e-government services and participate in joint projects. During 2003-04 the Division held a workshop at the AMA Conference on the on-line electronic survey service being provided to all municipalities by the province. The e-Government Joint Venture Committee has commenced on two pilot projects with the development of strategies for electronic council chambers and on-line parking ticket payments for the municipalities. The Province also completed the website template, which has been used by a number of municipalities in Nova Scotia.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The goal is to have 100% of the municipalities on the web to provide basic e-government services by 2004-05. It is the Department's objective to encourage the provision of additional municipal services by electronic means, and develop new initiatives with municipalities in e-government.

Inter-municipal Partnerships

The term "cooperative agreement" or " inter-municipal partnership", may be broadly defined as a relationship based upon mutual understanding and trust that is entered into between municipalities. Depending on how it is structured, a cooperative agreement may involve one or more government, private sector, or community groups. Agreements may be formal or informal, and most often evolve from a need to maximize resources in order to meet complimentary or compatible objectives. The result, whatever the nature of the service being provided or secured, can be a win-win arrangement for each of the participants providing participants with more effective and efficient use of available resources and enhanced access to services they might not otherwise be in a position to provide.

What does the *measure tell us*?

This measure tells us the extent of voluntary cooperation between municipalities and how municipalities are availing themselves of the opportunity to maximize resources and enhance service delivery in municipal government in order to achieve effective and efficient municipal government.

Where are we now?

The Department undertook an inventory of the type and numbers of inter-municipal partnerships in Nova Scotia municipalities and has established strong baseline data. To encourage more partnerships it released a Handbook on Inter-Municipal Partnership and Cooperation for Municipal Government in November of 2003 (with an abbreviated verison placed in the Local Government Resource Handbook). In conjunction with this release SNSMR hosted a workshop on cooperation with the Association of Municipal Administrators. These documents and the workshop were developed to assist municipalities in undertaking voluntary cooperative projects.

The Department also agreed to cost share in a partnership study for the Town of Amherst and Cumberland County. The study is looking at all of the services offered by the two municipalities to determine what opportunities exist to provide them cooperatively. These may include joint boards, lead municipality providing services for a fee, combined municipal departments, revenue sharing, boundary smoothing etc. As part of the project, a Best Practices Guide will be prepared and distributed to all municipalities. The work will be completed in the fall of 2004.

The Eastern Region Inter-Municipal Economic Development & Planning Initiative has been co-funded by SNSMR and eight municipalities in the Strait of Canso region. A Mayors and Wardens Committee is coordinating planning and other issues in the region to make the area more attractive to the natural gas related industry

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Department will follow up the initiatives outlined above with workshops in the spring of 2004 and an orientation session on co-operation for municipal councillors following the municipal election. In addition the Best Practices Guide that will flow out of the Amherst/Cumberland project will be made available to all councils.

Canada/Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program Implementation

"Supporting sustainable municipal development" is a desired outcome stated in the Business Plan for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations in order to make our communities healthier and more financially viable.

What does the measure tell us?

The Canada/Nova Scotia Infrastructure Program is a tri-parti agreement that represents a total of $196 million in federal, provincial and municipal investments in infrastructure over a six year period from 2000 to 2006. Municipal infrastructure is a crucial component in maintaining and growing healthy and viable communities across the province. The level of funding (percentage of total program) committed under the Infrastructure Program provides a measure of municipal infrastructure improvements that will be undertaken over the next year.

Where are we now?

As of March 31, 2004, there were 113 projects approved under the program, with a total value in excess of $167.1 million (96.7% of total program value).The Provincial commitment under the program for fiscal year 2003-04 was $9,260,000. The majority of the funding is directed toward green projects, designed to ensure effective wastewater management and safe drinking water. The federal provincial and municipal levels of government each invest one-third of the cost of a project.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Department's target is to have the total program funding committed by March 31, 2005.

Inclusive Transportation

"Supporting sustainable municipal development" is a desired outcome stated in the Business Plan for Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations and falls within Government's goal to grow the economy.

What does the measure tell us?

The Community Transportation Assistance Program was developed to assist municipalities and community groups to provide inclusive transportation services in low density population (rural) areas. The number of counties served by inclusive transportation provides an indication of the geographical coverage and gives the program direction to focus on areas where gaps exist.

Where are we now?

In the year 1999 there were four counties with inclusive transportation services. As of March 31, 2004 there were nine counties out of a total of 18 that had inclusive transportation services operating within their boundaries. The Province is committed to continued support of the existing inclusive transportation services and encourages the development of new services in locations where services are not currently available. As of March 31, 2004, the Province committed $364,195 towards eight rural community transportation services, or 91% of the Community Transportation Assistance Program (CTAP) provincial budget.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The goal is to increase the number of counties with inclusive transportation services.

Municipal Planning Strategies/by-laws Protecting Municipal Drinking Water Supplies

Safe clean drinking water is an essential part of daily living. It is critical to the health and quality of life of Nova Scotians, and important for our businesses. More than half of our province's population gets its drinking water from municipal water supplies. Establishing controls that help to protect the quality of water at its source is an important factor in providing high quality municipal drinking water. Land use controls (i.e. planning documents - municipal planning strategy, land use by-law and subdivision by-law adopted by a municipality under the authority of the *Municipal Government Act*) which regulate the type and extent of development in the area around the drinking water source (watershed also means groundwater recharge area) are an important mechanism for protecting water quality. Such controls are in keeping with the provisions of the *Statement of Provincial Interest Regarding Drinking Water* and *A Drinking Water Strategy for Nova Scotia.*

In 2001-2002 the Municipal Drinking Water Supply Planning Assistance Program was established to financially assist municipalities with the preparation of municipal planning documents that help protect municipal drinking water supplies.

What does the measure tell us?

This is a measure of the number of municipal drinking water supply sources, be it a lake, river or well (groundwater), which have municipal planning documents in place for the area surrounding the drinking water source. An increase in the number of planning documents in effect in the province for water supply watersheds is, in and of itself, a good thing. Still, the extent of the benefit of establishing land use controls is not uniform in all cases. Watersheds in which there is a lot of development pressure and much of the land is privately owned are likely to benefit more.

Where are we now?

The number of planning documents in place in municipal drinking water supply watersheds has slowly but steadily increased in recent decades. Currently there are 30 documents in place in water supply watershed areas. During the 2003-04 year three projects were for ground water supplies. The work associated with the funding contributes to the development of planning documents as well as ore comprehensive protection strategies for these water supplies. All of these activities are consistent with the Province's Drinking Water Strategy.

Where do we want to be in the future?

During 2004-2005 SNSMR intends to work more closely with the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour and support its efforts with municipalities to develop source water protection plans, of which municipal planning strategies and land use by-laws would be a component, particularly by more actively promoting the Municipal Drinking Water Supply Planning Assistance Program . By 2005-2006 the target is that ten additional municipal drinking water supply watersheds, from the base year of 2001-2002, will be covered by a municipal planning strategy and land use by-law. This is a 40% increase.

Alternative Program Delivery (APD):

APD's role is to develop and maintain partnerships on behalf of SNSMR to support the achievement of all departmental goals. Along with identifying potential opportunities, APD leads internal and external partners through program reviews, business case development and change initiatives. APD provides experience, expertise and leadership to support the improvement of streamlined access to services, identification of shared service opportunities, alternative program delivery and efficient municipal governments.

Key outcomes the division seeks to achieve include the demonstration of SNSMR's commitment and capacity to deliver services on behalf of other departments and increased awareness and understanding of the basic approach, methodology and operation of APD and partnership initiatives.

For 2003-04, the Division is able to report on three measures related to the two key outcomes.

Client Satisfaction/Quality of Service

What does the measure tell us?
A partner/client survey has been developed to measure how well APD has met partners' and clients' expectations in six key areas. These areas have been identified as important indicators of service quality. They are:

- was the process thorough?
- was the advice provided clear, concise and comprehensive?
- was the communication tactful and sensitive?
- were activities completed in a reasonable time frame?
- was change managed smoothly (where applicable)?
- overall satisfaction with service/deliverables

Where are we now?
APD has been in the business of developing partnerships for about 3.5 years. APD division will be surveying client satisfaction in late 2004.

Where do we want to be in the future?
APD's goal is to maintain 85% of clients satisfied or very satisfied with the six key indicators of service quality identified above.

Number of Organizations that enter into new partnerships with SNSMR

What does the measure tell us?
This measure seeks to give an indication as to how effective the division has been at entering into partnerships arrangements with new organizations and/or expanding existing relationships.

Where are we now?
The Division has thus far focused its efforts, and had considerable success, with a modest number of partner organizations. As such, the current measure of four (4) organizations is consistent with the divisions strategies and targets.

Where do we want to be in the future?
APD's goal is to significantly increase the number of client organization that have partnered with the department. Toward this end, the division has significantly increased marketing activities in 2003-04 to identify potential partners. It is expected that the results of these efforts will substantially materialize in 2004-05.

Number of investigative projects (reviews, feasability studies, evaluations) initiated with other organizations

What does the measure tell us?
This measure reports the volume of new projects related to possible partnership opportunities being initiated within the division. It provides an indication of how many opportunities are being considered, at any one time, for delivery using the SNSMR infrastructure. The measure does not capture the complexity, scope or scale of the investigations.

Where are we now?
The Division has consistently conducted investigative projects in 2001-02 (7), 2002-03 (6) and 2003-04 (8). As present, this level of investigative activity is felt to be in rough balance with the capacity of the department to absorb new services into its service delivery infrastructure.

Where do we want to be in the future?
As the Division acquires experience, expertise and additional staff resources, the volume of projects conducted annually is expected to increase.

Ratio of Assessment Values to Property Sales

Assessment Services is mandated under the Nova Scotia Assessment Act to provide property assessment that is reflective of market value. Market value property assessment is filed with each municipality annually, in the form of an assessment roll which forms the basis for their primary source. One measure of the reliability of the assessment roll is measuring the assessment to sales ratio. The ratio, of 95-105% is an international standard used by most assessing jurisdictions across North America. Reliable revenue generation is in support of the department's goal to foster the development of efficient, effective and financially healthy municipal governments.

What does the measure tell us?

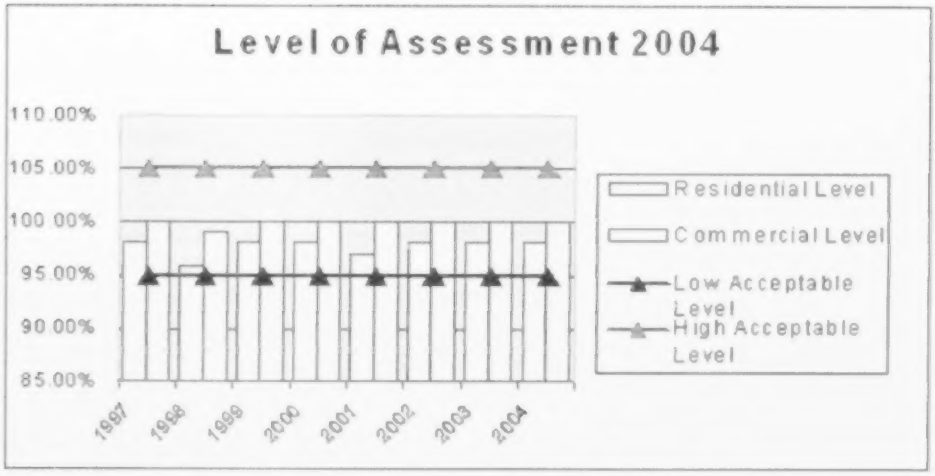
The 95 to 105% ratio of assessment to sales indicates that the total assessment base is reflective of market value and that the Division has met its legislative standard.

Where are we now?

For the 2004 assessment year the assessment to sales ratio for the residential file is 98% and for the commercial file 100% respectively.

Where do we want to be in the future?

An outcome close to 100% market value is desirable, however ratios between 95-105% are acceptable and is an international standard.



Source: Internal SNSMR Information

Number of Appeals/Percent Clients Satisfied With Service

Under the Nova Scotia Assessment Act there is a provision for the appeal of a property assessment. The appeal allows for an objective review of the assessment value. The preliminary assessment roll has contributed greatly to the education and awareness of the property owner of the market based assessment process. Increased confidence levels in assessment products and services supports the Department's goal to foster the development of efficient, effective and financially healthy municipal governments.

What does the measure tell us?

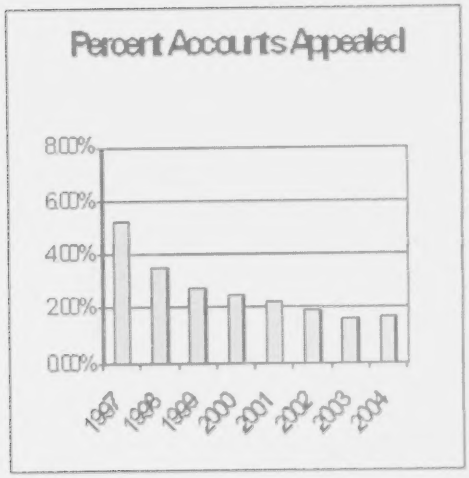
Appeals are an indication that property owners are challenging the validity of the property assessment. A reduction in appeals and high levels of client satisfaction indicate that property owners recognize that the assessment reflects market value, and are satisfied with service.

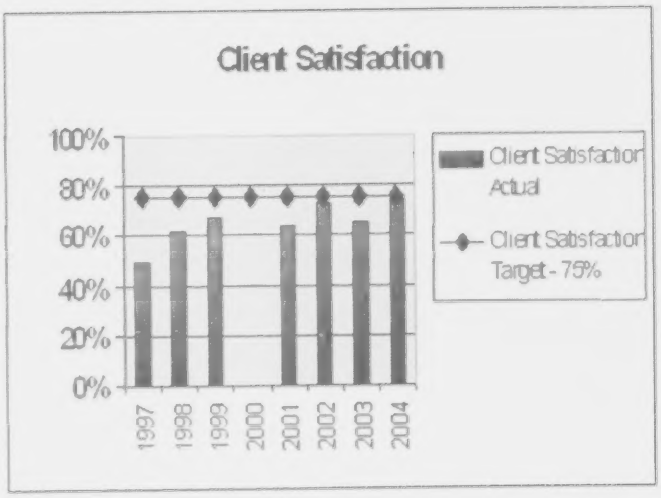
Where are we now?

For the fiscal year 2003-04, 1.65% of the total number of assessment accounts were appealed. During the same period, 74% of clients surveyed were satisfied with the overall service level provided by assessors.

Where do we want to be in the future?

It is the Division's objective to continue with the decrease in appeals and to reach and maintain a 75% satisfaction level in service.





Source: Internal SNSMR Information

Satisfaction Level of Municipal Units

Assessment Services provides an annual property assessment to municipal units in the form of an assessment roll. This is the main source of revenue generation for municipalities. The production and delivery of the assessment file must be complete, accurate, timely and in accordance with legislative requirements and business standards. Achieving a high satisfaction level in terms of quality of product and level of service for the municipal client base supports the goal of efficient, effective and financially healthy municipal governments.

What does the measure tell us?

The percentage of municipal units satisfied with the products and services provides information for the assessment service regarding municipal confidence with assessment products and services.

Where are we now?

The survey is complete but has not been issued.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The Division is aiming to achieve 65% in 2004-05.

Percentage of Assessment Value Lost Through Appeals

Under the *Nova Scotia Assessment Act* there is the provision for an objective review by way of the appeal process. Management of the appeal loss in dollar value to each municipal unit is critical so as to ensure stability and quality of the assessment roll. This appeal loss is measured against the total assessed value. A quality assessment roll supports the Department's goal to foster the development of efficient, effective and financially healthy municipal governments.

What does the measure tell us?

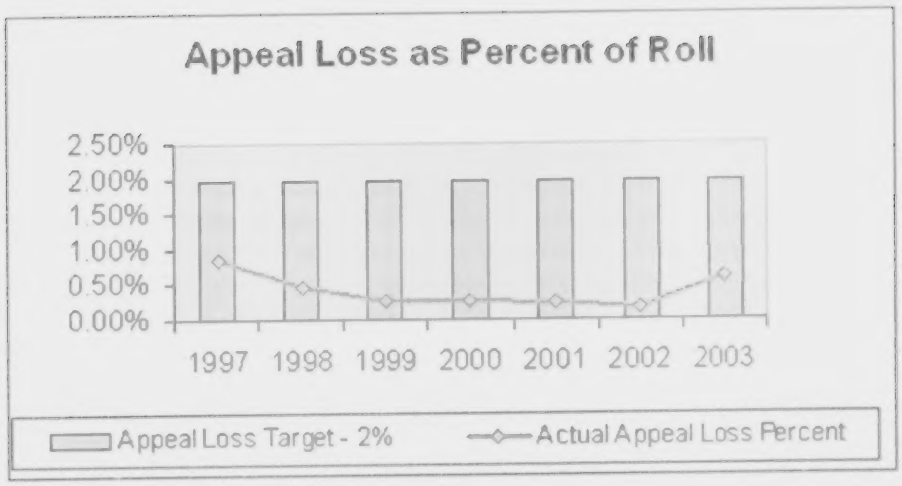
A low percentage loss in dollar value under appeal means greater stability in municipal revenues.

Where are we now?

For the 2003 assessment year the total assessment base was reduced by 0.6% due to appeals.

Where do we want to be in the future?

The objective is to maintain the loss below 2% of the total assessment value. Continuation of the preliminary assessment roll, provincial inspection programs and development of an IT strategy will help to achieve this target.



Source: Internal SNSMR Information

Appendix 1

Performance Measurement Change Reconciliation Form - Fiscal Year 2003-04			
Core Business - Service Delivery			
Measure	**Base Year Data**	**Target 2004/05**	**Comments**
- % of customers satisfied with services received through SNSMR sites.	- 89%	-90%	- measure continued in 2004-05
- % of customers waiting less than 10 minutes at service centres	- 50%	- 80%	- measure continued in 2004-05
- % of customers having phone calls answered in less than 20 seconds at Call Centres	- 80%	- 80%	- measure continued in 2004-05
- number of new electronic service transactions implemented annually.	- 4	- 4	- measure continued in 2004-05
- % of business clients satisfied with service	- 84%	- 85%	- new measure for 2004-05
- % of driver road test appointments scheduled within five weeks of request	- 90%	- 100%	- new measure for 2004-05
- % of residential tenancy hearings scheduled within four weeks of request	- 90%	- 100%	- new measure for 2004-05

Performance Measurement Change Reconciliation Form - Fiscal Year 2003-04			
Core Business - Program Management and Corporate Services			
Measure	**Base Year Data**	**Target 2004/05**	**Comments**
- actual debt collection revenues as a percent of estimates	- 100%	- 100% (adjusted for changes to forecast due to changing economic conditions)	- measure continued in 2004-05.
- deaths and injuries (incidents) due to operation of a motor vehicle	-503	-30% reduction in deaths and injuries achieved for the period 2008-2010 versus 1996-2001	- measure transferred to TPW during 2004-05.
- actual tobacco tax revenues as a percent of estimates	- 99.9	- $\geq$ 100% (estimates will be adjusted to reflect volume sales and tax levels)	- new measure for 2004-05
- ratio of non-adjudicated to adjudicated cases[1] in residential tenancies	- N/A	- 10% increase in ratio	- new measure for 2004-05
- violations by regulated businesses as a percentage of inspections conducted	- N/A	- will increase initially but is expected to decline through time	- new measure for 2004-05
- number of audits/inspections resulting in unpaid tax or other actions[2]	- 141	- increase by 10%	- new measure for 2004-05
- number of business licensing inspections and audits	- 25	- 35	- new measure for 2004-05

Performance Measurement Change Reconciliation Form - Fiscal Year 2003-04			
Core Business - Alternative Program Delivery			
Measure	Base Year Data	Target 2004/05	Comments
- ratio of assessment to sales	- 97% residential /resource - 100% commercial (year end 2001)	- % between 95-105	- measure continued in 2004-05.
- % of clients (property owners and municipal units) satisfied or very satisfied with service	- 74% (year end 2001) - TBD	- 75% Property - 65% Municipal	- measure continued in 2004-05. Municipal measure added in 2004-05
- % of assessment value lost through appeals	- 0.9% of total assessment (year end 2001)	- ≤ 2%	- measure continued in 2004-05.
- appeals as a % of total assessment	- 2.2 % (year end 2001)_	- reduce the number of appeals from current levels.	- measure continued in 2004-05. Measure is now expressed as a percentage.
- % of Divisional Level of Effort/Resources devoted towards developing strategies, approaches, methodologies and tools.	- 20%	- below 30%	- new measure for 2004-05
- # of new opportunities identified for I/SSD consideration.	- 4	- 5-10	- new measure for 2004-05
- # of new Project Charters or MOUs, formal and informal, entered into to evaluate I/SSD opportunities.	- 4	- 1 - 3	- new measure for 2004-05
- # of SLAs entered into between SNSMR and partner organizations	- 0	- 2 - 4	- new measure for 2004-05
- # of new service offerings using SNSMR channels and/or infrastructure	- 0	- 5 - 10	- new measure for 2004-05
- # of Partnership reviews conducted.	- 0	- 2 - 3	- new measure for 2004-05
- % of divisional level of effort/resources devoted towards corporate and/or departmental issues and initiatives	- 15%	- below 40%	- new measure for 2004-05

Performance Measurement Change Reconciliation Form - Fiscal Year 2003-04			
Core Business - Municipal Services			
Measure	Base Year Data	Target 2004/05	Comments
- % of municipalities with a satisfactory municipal indicators rating	- TBD	- TBD	- measure continued in 2004-05, reworded to read "% of municipalities using municipal indicators initiative to improve performance."
- # of municipal units in which e-government framework established	- 10% (Sept. 2001)	- 100% of municipalities in position to implement basic e-government services	- measure continued in 2004-05.
- % of Can/NS Infrastructure Program funding committed to ($120 M) investment in municipal infrastructure	- 0 (2000-01)	- 75%	- measure continued in 2004-05.
- # of counties served by inclusive transportation	- 0	- 5	- measure continued in 2004-05; target changed to 9
-number of new municipal planning strategies/by-laws that protect municipal drinking water supplies completed	- 25	- 35	- measure continued in 2004-05 with the wording of the measure changed to "number of municipalities with by-laws that protect municipal drinking water supplies."

Performance Measurement Change Reconciliation Form - Fiscal Year 2003-04			
Core Business - Registry and Information Management Services			
Measure	**Base Year Data**	**Target 2004/05**	**Comments**
- % of business clients who can complete all necessary licencing requirements through the NSBR	- 30%	- 80%	- measure continued in 2004-05
- % of land parcels converted to new land tenure system	- 0%	- 11%	- measure continued in 2003-04. Target changed to 11% from 10%.
- % compliance with national standards for Vital Statistics security	- TBD	- 100%	- new measure for 2004-05
- % of geographic information data sets accessible from a desktop computer	- TBD	- 80% government users - 100% of all users by 2008	- new measure for 2004-05